smoothly during the first year of its existence, and no dissatisfaction has been expressed either by the doctors or by the parents. It was conceived to cater for about 400 to 500 infants from birth up to the first year, and it has so far absorbed over 200 of them, while the full complement would have been reached during the coming winter if we had been able to carry on.

I feel it necessary to stress two points. One is the surprising fact that the majority of the infants' deaths took place, and still to a great extent occur, in institutions and not in the homes. It was this factor that led us to the creation of a domiciliary service which would keep the infants out of hospitals as far as possible, especially seeing that the majority of these institutional deaths occurred from such common ailments as bronchopneumonia and gastro-enteritis, while the majority of them could quite easily be treated at home with the aid of efficient district nurses, thus also considerably reducing the costs of treatment as borne by the community.

The other factor is that, while the local authorities, such as county or borough councils, can and do provide assistance through their welfare centres and clinics for such infants as are not too ill to receive *ambulatory* treatment, these bodies have so far been expressly barred by legislation from organizing any domiciliary medical service consisting of medical practitioners for the benefit of infants whose ailments require such a *domiciliary* attention. As, however, our campaign was organized by the medical men themselves, you will readily appreciate, Sir, how perfectly the scheme filled this gap in the chain of medical services, particularly in Paddington, whose death rate amongst infants has for many years past been higher than in other London boroughs.—I am, etc.,

London, W.2, Aug. 2nd. G. de Swietochowski.

CALCIUM AND THE PARATHYROIDS

Sir,—There is one statement in Lord Dawson's stirring presidential address as reported in the *Journal* of July 30th that has mystified me. "Let these [parathyroid] glands become overactive," he says, "and the bones of the skeleton lose their calcium support and fractures ensue." In a previous sentence Lord Dawson points out that removal of these glands is followed by a fall in the calcium content, and that subsequent feeding with parathyroid extract restores the normal calcium equilibrium. This being the case, is it not more in accordance with fact that bone fractures consequent on overactivity of these glands is referable rather to relative increase of lime salts (the brittleness factor) in the total osseous content at the expense of the collagenous element, which provides the elasticity factor?—I am, etc.,

Charles M. Beadnell,
Ringwood, July 30th. Surgeon Rear-Admiral.

ADMINISTRATION OF NEMBUTAL

Sir,—Dr. Davidson, before the Section of Mental Disorder at the Centenary Meeting on July 27th, referred to the use of nembutal as a hypnotic in general practice. This drug is known to be relatively inactive when taken on a loaded stomach. I find the crude drug is readily soluble in neutral or alkaline aqueous solution but is converted to the insoluble basic acid by the presence of acids, and even by weak organic acids. This would explain the variable action of oral nembutal, and indicate the desirability of administering beforehand a sufficiency of an antacid such as magnesium hydroxide wherever the reaction of the gastric juice is doubtful—for example, during parturition, where the dose is sometimes repeated several times at intervals of two to three hours and nourishment cannot be withheld.—I am, etc.,

Penrith, July 31st. Alison N. Macbeth.

Obituary

MATTHEW HAY, M.D., LL.D., F.R.C.P.I. (Hon.)

The death took place on July 30th at his residence, 14, Rubislaw Terrace, Aberdeen, and in his seventy-eighth year, of Dr. Matthew Hay, emeritus professor of forensic medicine in the University of Aberdeen. Professor Hay, who was the son of a well-known colliery proprietor, was born near Falkirk in 1855.

After an early education at Dollar Academy, then a celebrated Scottish school, he took up the study of medicine at Edinburgh University, where he graduated M.B., C.M., with first-class honours, in 1878, being awarded the Ettles prize as the most distinguished student of his year. He later became demonstrator in materia medica at the University under the late Sir Thomas Fraser, a post which he held for five years, and in which he gained that special interest in toxicology which distinguished him in later years. During the vacations he enlarged his knowledge of this subject by study at Strasbourg, Berlin, and Munich. On proceeding to the M.D. degree at Edinburgh in 1881 he was awarded a gold medal for his thesis, and at the same time received the Goodsir memorial prize for physiological research. In 1884 he was appointed professor of pharmacology and therapeutics in Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, but having meanwhile been elected to the chair of forensic medicine and public health in Aberdeen, he did not take up the duties of the former post. He occupied the professorship at Aberdeen for the long period of forty-three years, and from 1888 to 1923 was also medical officer of health for that city. In the latter year public health was separated from the chair of forensic medicine, and the late Dr. J. Parlane Kinloch became head of the public health department in the University, as well as succeeding Professor Hay in the post of medical officer of health for the city. They had been associated since 1914, when Dr. Kinloch became lecturer in public health under Professor Hay, and many of the important medical developments for which the Aberdeen Medical School became celebrated were the outcome of their co-operation. Professor Hay is credited with having been the originator of the idea of the joint hospitals scheme at Forresterhill in which the University, the voluntary hospitals, and the municipality were combined. For this scheme ex-Lord Provost Lewis succeeded in raising over £400,000, and the Prince of Wales, in laying the foundation stone of the new hospital, spoke in glowing terms of the possibilities that it opened up. The details were subsequently elaborated under the supervision of Dr. Parlane Kinloch in the six years before he became Chief Medical Officer to the Department of Health for Scotland. Professor Hay was more of an administrator than a worker at laboratory research, but while still engaged with materia medica he published the result of a valuable experimental research on the physiological action of saline cathartics, and in this connexion his name is best known for the sulphur bile-salts test which he devised in 1885. He was one of the first to suggest, in an article on "Typhus and vermin infection," published in 1905, the means of transmission now recognized for this disease.

Professor Hay figured as an expert witness in many *causes célèbres* of the past. In the Monson trial, which resulted in a verdict of "Not proven," he had given evidence for the defence, while Sir Henry Littlejohn had been medical witness for the Crown. During the course of his professorship Dr. Matthew Hay rendered services as examiner in his subject to various universities, including those of London, Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, and St. Andrews. To his own University of Aberdeen, as well as to the city, his administrative services were of a very high order. Becoming a member of its Univer-

sity Court in 1889, he was for many years its most important medical member, and was responsible for carrying out several of the developments that followed upon the Report of the Scottish Universities Commission of that year, his period of service on the court extending from 1889 to 1926. He also represented Aberdeen University on the General Medical Council from 1919 to 1924, and, more important perhaps, in connexion with Scottish medical education, he was for twenty years the representative of this university on the Carnegie Trust for the Scottish Universities during the period 1901–20. He was for a few years a member of the Medical Research Committee of Great Britain, and in 1913 was offered its secretaryship, but his numerous other duties prevented him from accepting this post. Other consultative posts which he held from time to time and in which his wide experience proved of great value included those of member of the Consultative Council for Medical Services of the Scottish Board of Health, chairman of its Research Committee, Governor of Aberdeen Technical College, and member of committee of the Rowett Research Institute for Animal Nutrition. He held the rank of lieutenant-colonel R.A.M.C.(T.) in the Sanitary Service. He was also a prominent member of the British Medical Association, and in his early days was elected a vice-president of the Section of Pharmacology and Therapeutics at the Belfast Meeting of 1884 ; while at the meeting of 1914, in Aberdeen, he acted as president of the Section of State Medicine and Medical Jurisprudence. Professor Hay was honoured by the bestowal of an LL.D. degree both by his Alma Mater, Edinburgh, and by Aberdeen University, which he had served so well, while the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland made him an honorary Fellow.

Professor Hay in 1884 married Margaret, daughter of the late John Crawford, shipowner of Grangemouth, Scotland. She predeceased him in 1926, and he is survived by four sons and two daughters. A funeral service was held on August 2nd in the Mitchell Hall, Marischal College, Aberdeen, which was attended by representatives of the University and municipality of Aberdeen, and the interment took place on the following day at Camelon Cemetery, Falkirk.

PATRICK THOMAS O'SULLIVAN, M.D., M.R.C.P.

The death took place recently, in his sixty-fifth year, at his residence, South Mall, Cork, of Patrick Thomas O'Sullivan, M.D. R.U.I. Dr. O'Sullivan had had his early education at the North Monastery, Cork. Having passed the matriculation and other arts examinations in the Royal University, he commenced his career as medical student in the Queen's College (now University College), Cork. He had a distinguished career as a student in the medical school, having gained scholarships and exhibitions during his entire course. He obtained his M.B., B.Ch., and B.A.O. in 1891, M.D. R.U.I. in 1901, and M.R.C.P.Lond. in 1909. Immediately after being qualified he was appointed by Professor J. J. Charles as assistant lecturer and demonstrator of anatomy in the medical school of the Queen's College. After the abolition of the Royal University (Ireland) and the establishment of the National University, he was appointed senator of the latter body, a position which he held until his death. He succeeded Professor W. Ashley Cummins as professor of medicine in the medical school, University College, Cork, which became one of the constituent colleges of the new National University of Ireland.

Dr. O'Sullivan held many important hospital appointments, being senior physician in the Cork South Charitable Infirmary and physician to St. Vincent's Hospital for Women and Children. He had a large consultant practice throughout Munster. Although a very busy man he always took a keen interest in medico-political matters, and was a past-president of the Munster Branch of the British Medical Association and an ex-president of the Cork Medical and Surgical Society.

Dr. J. W. McNEE writes: My absence on holiday abroad prevented me from knowing of Professor O'Sullivan's death until long after the event, but I should like to be privileged to write a few words in his memory. He was known to have suffered from diabetes for some time, with cardiac complications, and he died on June 15th, aged 67. I was his co-examiner in Cork for three years, and frequently his guest, so I knew him well. P. T. O'Sullivan, a big man physically and mentally, was for many years one of the outstanding figures in the medical life of the South and South-West of Ireland, and had a strong influence on all the students who passed through his hands. He was a first-rate general physician, brusque at times, but full of common sense and kindliness, and equally at home in general medicine, in fevers, in children's diseases, and in dermatology. He was seen at his very best with Mrs. O'Sullivan in his beautiful house and garden at Feltrim, near Cork, among his children and grandchildren. His favourite relaxation was fishing in his beloved Kerry. O'Sullivan was a thorough Irishman, but one of the few who, while in active work in Ireland, took a higher London degree—he became M.R.C.P.Lond. in 1909. He is survived by his widow, and of his family two have entered their father's profession—Dr. T. D. O'Sullivan of Cork and Dr. Maureen Lahiff, wife of Dr. E. P. Lahiff of Mitcham, Surrey.

THE LATE DR. GEORGE GIBSON

Dr. HALLIDAY SUTHERLAND writes:

The untimely death of George Gibson was a shock to his friends, and now, all over the world, Edinburgh men of the 1900's will be retelling those high-spirited stories of joyous adventures of "Young George," but none of us will ever tell them as well as he did. To some of us he was "Young George" to the end. His father, J. A. Gibson, was the leading and most popular consultant of his time in Scotland, and between father and son there existed a degree of affection, confidence, and mutual respect which is rare. But the son was sensitive lest any should think that he was trading on his father's reputation. He went out of his way, in fact to Canada, to establish his independence. Some thought this quixotic, but it was a mental attitude which his father appreciated. In 1914 George Gibson went to France, and within two years had risen from Captain to be D.A.D.M.S. to the Canadian Corps. He had great abilities, the command of adjectives, the power of narrative, and a genius for friendship. There was nothing mean or jealous in his nature, and he was most generous in appreciating any achievements of his friends. Unfairness was one of the things which he found hard to forgive. When George Gibson died the trumpets were not sounding, but by his life he had made this world a very much happier place for many of us than it would otherwise have been. When we come to ultimate and eternal values that is perhaps a better memorial than monuments of brass.

Dr. CHARLES EDWARD HETHERINGTON died at Londonderry, at the age of 84, on July 25th. He was the last surviving son of the late Dr. George Hetherington of Athlone, Co. Westmeath, and was educated at Portora Royal School and Trinity College, Dublin, where he graduated M.B., M.Ch. in 1870. First appointed house-surgeon of Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital, Dublin, he afterwards became assistant medical officer in Downpatrick Infirmary and at the Downpatrick District Asylum. Endowed with unusual professional gifts and a charming personality he quickly won all hearts when, as a young man of 28, he came to Londonderry as resident medical superintendent of the district asylum. He filled this post with great distinction for forty-three years, till his retirement in September, 1919.